

A Sermon of  
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Hosea XIII. Ver. ix.

*O Israel, thou hast destroyed thy self,  
but in me is thy help.*



Though *Israels* name speak out his glorious advancement and priviledge beyond all other parties in the world, yet *Israel* may come to be in a very low condition, even to be destroyed in all appearance, and cut off, as to their parts. *O Israel thou destroyed thy self.* It is true, the Lord hath a soveraigne hand in the low condition of his people, and it is true also, that *Israels* enemies have a great hand in their low condition, for which they will get no thanks from God, but it is as true that *Israel* hath a principal hand in this his low condition, he himself procuring his own overthrow. *O Israel thou hast destroyed thy self.* 't is the iniquity of his people that separat betwixt him and them. *Isai: 59. 2. Behold the Lords hand is not shorned that it cannot save, neither is his ear heavy, that it cannot hear but your iniquity hath separat betwixt you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not bear.* And though many in *Israel* are now and then taking with this, that they by their sinning have a principal hand in their

their own overthrow and destruction: yet a through, reall; and right conviction of this is not soon fastned on Israel. The Lord many times in this prophecy hath told them that their destruction was of themselves, and he hath used severall arguments to bear in the conviction hereof upon them in the preceeding part of this Chap: and yet in the text he comes over it again, and leaves it of new at their door, as if he had said, I have often told you before, and have proven from the beginning of this Chap. that ye have ruined and overthrown yourselves by your sin: But because ye are not throughly enough convinced of it, I tell you again of it, again consider of it, and lay it more seriously to heart. *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself.* which sayes, that it is not easy to bind on the Lords people a through, right and real conviction that they have a main and chief hand by their sin in their own overthrow and destruction.

The Lords people may be brought under stroaks 1. To acknowledge that their Low condition and overthrow is from the Lord. 2. They may be brought to blame Adversaries, as being the instruments in Gods hand of their trouble. 3. They may blame their own sin. as the cause of their ruine, but a through, reall, and right conviction of this they are not easily brought unto, which hath these four qualifications. 1. It must be personal. Some will grant, that it is sin that hath ruined the Church of God, but will not let it light that it is their sin. 2. It must be particular, It is not only my sin, but it is this and that sin in me that hath done it. 3. It must be a pungent, wounding conviction of sin, as the cause of their ruine, a conviction which makes the heart sick, which is very rare. Many will blame themselves, and particularly many sins they are guilty of, and will grant they have a hand in bringing much wo and wrack on the Land and on themselves, and yet will not be affected for all that. 4. It must be an abiding permanent conviction. many who

who have obtained the former three, come short in this. many have been so far convinced of sin, of their own finnes, as having a great hand in all the wrath lying upon us, and have hung down their heads like a bulrush for a day, but these affections have not bidden, they have not carried that weight alongs with them, as a counterbalance to other things, till the Lords wrath was turned away from themselves, and from the Land.

What are the marks of a through, real, and right conviction that we have destroyed our selves, and have had a great hand in the destruction of *Israel* by our sin? *Answ:* They who are rightly convinced, they lay their hand upon their mouth; they are silent before the Lord, notwithstanding of all that he hath done, is doing, or may do to them and to the land, so far are they from complaining and repining for any thing that is come upon them. *Pf. 39. 9. I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because thou O Lord did it.* There was a man rightly convinced of sin. As long as a person or people multiply complaints of heavy burdens and sad things on them, there is not a through, real, and right conviction fastned on their heart, for as soon as the conviction is through, they will be dumb, not opening their mouth. and *Lam. 3. 39. wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sin?* will a rational man, if he be a man and not a beatt, complain for any crosse dispensation? he will not, for it is the Punishment of his sin, and he is punished less than his iniquities deserve. 2. They are busy in searching out the wayes whereby they have brought destruction on themselves and the Church, *Lam. 3. v. 40. Let us search and try our wayes.* Every man that is throughly, really and rightly convinced, that he hath had a hand in the overthrow of the people of God, he will search and labour to find out what is the hand he hath had in it. 3. A right, real and through conviction hath following

in it a sudden and hasty reformation of these evils, which have procured and drawn on that wrath. And for me to say, that I have laid my sin to heart, as being convinced, that I have had a hand in this wrath that is on the Church and people of God, and can father it on this and that evil in my self, and yet I study not to remove it, it is but a fancy and not a real and through conviction. And though I would say, I am convinced, I but lie- for, would I hold a stroak on my self and others, if I judged it a stroak, and that my sinnes procured it, if by any means I could remove it? This is also clear from *Lam 3 40. Let us turn again to the Lord*, A through, real, and right conviction of sin, and of our ruine by sin, brings every man to seek to reforme what is amiss. 4. It makes the person diligently plead at the thron of grace for mercy, reconciliation and peace with God through a Mediator. speak of other things what ye will, that sticks most in the heart of a thoroughly convinced sinner. *Lam. 3. 41. Let us lift up our hearts, with our hands, or in our hands to God in the heavens.* Speak to such a Sinner of a delivery, and of this and that promising meane. and of an outgate, they signify not much to him without the peace and favour of God, moyen in heaven is that which most bulks in his eye. 5. They who are rightly convinced, when ever they hear or observe any new emergent. or declaration of Gods wrath, or evidence that he is angry, they not only look upon sin, as procuring it, but much shame and confusion fills their face. Alas! we but sport with terrible emergents of Gods wrath and anger, while we tell them over as newes, and never reflect upon our selves, nor are ashamed, nor blush as procuring them. If we were convinced, that we by our sin have a hand in harling the people of God before these miserable, unhappy ensnaring Courts, is it possible but we would blush and be ashamed. Ye would think it strange, if one should



should come in and tell you, such a man is harled before the Commission Court, another is imprisoned or confined, and ye had a hand in it; but if ye were convinced, that it is right true, your hand was in it, would ye not be ashamed of it? Never think that ye are throughly, and rightly convinced, or that you really think your sin had a hand in such a thing, till you also think that ye have reason to be ashamed, and to take shame to your self for every thing you hear of that Kind. 6. They that have such a conviction will not be fortified with every delivery or out gate, except the bond be taken off, and the Lord remove the quarrel and sin, that brought on the stroak. I question not but this may be a challenge to all the Lords people, that they have been content of, and would have been at any outgate or delivery, but is that each one of us to resemble the children of a King, & such a King in our sufferings, who should say (and would say if rightly convinced) no outgate, except God give repentance, take away sin, loose bands, and heal backslidings. And I would ask you, have any of you this for your work and business, for which you plead at his throne? The rightly convinced soul sayes, Lord, either deliver thy people from iniquity, or let them ly as they are, either loose our bonds, or no deliverance will content us; for they know any outward delivery could signify little or nothing to them, except iniquity were removed, & their bonds loosed & backslidings healed, because otherwise there would be a new browst upon the back of it. 7. They can put a blanck in Gods hand, to fill up what sufferings he pleaseth. It is not their care and tear what may be inflicted on them, they are resolute to suffer whatever he thinks good and that patiently. *Mic. 7. I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I have sinned against him, I will justify the Lord, and sit silent, not only under what he hath done, but under what he shall do to*

me, and will never ask a reason of his dealing, for I know he is holy and just, and can do me no wrong; and when it is so, then I rake up my self destroying in the right hew, and am convinced I have a principal hand in it, and will say, righteousness belongeth unto God, but shame and Confusion of face to me, 8. They have an high and eminent resentment of new discovered sin, whether in themselves or in others; and we will find some strange thoughts of resentment that this conviction hath driven some to in Scripture, as in that holy man *Exra 9. v. 3.* who when he hears of the sin of the affinity of the people with strangers, *he rends his mantle, and plucks out the hair of his head and beard;* his heart faileth him, and he falls down upon his face as dead; that is an high resentment, and an evidence of a through conviction. And if such a conviction be, when ye hear tell that this or that man has slipped in a sin, to the bringing of more misery on the people of God, ye will also resent it sadly. ye will also find another high resentment of new discovered sin in *Phinebas Numb. 25.* When he sees *Zimry and Cozby* in the act of uncleanness, he steps out of his station and strikes them both thorow the belly. Alas! if there were zeal in us, flowing from a right conviction of sin, when we hear this man falls in this sin, and another in drunkenness, a third hath taken that wicked declaration, our hearts would rise in high resentments of the things; our hatred of them would be so irreconcilable, we could not digest them, or our hearts would fail us at the new discoveries of new sin and guilt, new sin would make us sit down astonished, and nothing would weaken our hope and make us despond but that alone.

*Vse 1.* Be not easily satisfied with your self, under any convictions for sin ye win at, under all this misery that is come upon the Church and People of God and upon your selves.

*Vse 2.*

*Vse* 2. Never rest till ye get a conviction qualified with that fourfold qualification. 1. Till your conviction be personal, that you bring home things to your self, and be madeto say, *I am the man*; God is angry at me, and I have procured this wrath to the Land, and to my self. 2. Rest not till ye come to Particulars, this and that which I have done, and am guilty of, is the cause of all this desolation, ruine and overthrow; generall confessions will not do it. 3. Rest not till your heart be kindly affected with the sins ye are convinced of; seek the conviction may be pungent and wounding. 4. Let not your conviction be transient, but seek it may be an abiding conviction. The wrath that is on us is no transient thing; it is like a cloud that is sealed over us, and it is a sore matter, that our conviction should not be a settled and abiding conviction.

*Vse* 3. Let me say, I fear upon triall, that by the marks that have been given, a through, reall, and right conviction of sin be very rare, and there be few found, for all that's come and gone, that have laid this matter rightly to heart. *O Israel thou hast destroyed thy self.* Do ye think that the Lords people have been weeping these three or four years under a through conviction of their sin, and that the Lord regards not their tears? No surely, this is not it, we have not been humbled and weeping; and therefore, think it not strange, that it be with us as at this day. The Lords people meet and pray, and there is no answer returned, but one ill upon the back of another; and the prophane are stumbled and hardned, when they see success dorth follow their prayers, and they do prosper in their way. In this we are to clear the Lord and blame ourselves. I doubt nothing, but if from a through real conviction, that we have ruined ourselves by our sin, we have been humbling ourselves before God, we should either by this time

have had an outgate, or known better the outgate and mind of God concerning the continuance of our triall & outgate; or at least we should have had some token for good shewed unto us from the Lord. Oh! have we been silent before the Lord under our conviction, & put from our complaining? have we been busied in searching out our sins, whereby we have destroyed ourselves & others? have we made haste to reforme these evils we found upon search? have we diligently pleaded at the throne of grace for pardon and peace with God, and the loosing of our bonds? have we upon every new declaration of wrath been ashamed, as having a deep hand in drawing it forth? would we be satisfied with no outgate, nor promising mean of delivery, except the Lord free us of the yoke of our transgressions; and heal our backslidings? have we been brought to put a blanck in Gods hand to afflict us as he pleaseth? have we in zeal highly resented new discovering of sin and wrath? No doubt there are many, who think there is no wrath upon *Scotland*, and that *Israel* is in a good case, and hath not destroyed himself. But oh! are ye so blind? are ye not convinced that God hath prophaned the Church and State of *Scotland*, that he hath loosed the girdle of our Nobles, and hath made their authority vile and contemptible before the people? that all our precious things are taken captive by the Adversary; That our Interpreters, each of them one of a thousand, are some of them banished, others of them confined, and a godless prophane pack put in their roome? do ye not yet see, how the Land is ruined and destroyed, and the flocks of the Lords people scattered? & are these things & many moe no evidences of Gods wrath? I would not wish to any man such a measure of wrath, as is on that man who thinks there is no wrath upon *Scot'and*. Again, Are there not many of you saint heared? Is not your spirit & courage,

and

and valiantness for the truth gone? And is that no evidence of wrath? I doubt nothing, but it is a part of our plague, that we are as *Ephraim, a silly dove without heart*. nor do I deny that a manifest breach of Covenant lyes on us upon that account; but this is not all. *Israel* hath sinned, and therefore is his heart faint, and his hands feeble, and he fled before the pursuer. would ye know then, why the people of God are so faint hearted and weak? why *Abners* hands were bound, and he died as a fool for sin, and want of a through, real and right conviction for sin, and not turning to God? otherwise I nothing doubt, but they had been as bread to us this day; and one of us should have chased a thousand of them who now banish us, and harle us to prison. There is no hope as to this thing, till once we be brought to know and be made sensible, *we have destroyed our selves*. And if we have a heart to believe this Text, and the great Truth contained in it, it is your sin hath ruined you, and separated betwixt God and you. Why sit ye still looking one upon another? Arise, as it is said of *Ezra*, he arose and fell about the Confession of sin, and they entered into a Covenant to amend what was amiss. So I would say to you, Sit not still discouraged, arise and fall to search and find out what is your part of the sin that hath brought on this wrath. Make your conviction personal, particular and pungent, every family apart, and their wives apart; set some time for the work, the finding out, and the confessing of sin and repentance for it, and turning to God; and then if the Lord shall not bring about your delivery, you shall have ground of much peace, and ye shall have an easy task in your sufferings. If we were once thoroughly convinced of sin, and if matters were as clear betwixt our God and us, as they are betwixt him and his enemies, I am confident the Lord would appear, and make bare his holy arme yet once more for his



people. O But matters are clear betwixt God and Ad-  
 verlaries; and if we could say here is one evidence that  
 matters are clear betwixt God and us, and that we have  
 heard the voice of the rod, and of him that hath appoin-  
 ted it, I nothing doubt, but ere long the Lord should  
 do some great thing for us. But I know it is but lost  
 labour for the most part, for a Minister to give you a  
 General Charge, and bid every one search his own way,  
 and labour that his Conviction may be through, affect-  
 ing and humbling. Many cannot be moved to it. ye  
 will hear what we say, but will not do what we bid you;  
 for many a time hath God by his Ministers bidden you  
 search your wayes since this work began; and I put it to  
 your Conscience, if ye have set time apart for it. And  
 if ye say, though ye win not to much, yet it is the work ye  
 are, and were about. I fear, few of you can say this  
 much; & who have it not to say, have an ill conscience,  
 and scarcely can I think that ever they had this real,  
 through and right conviction, That they have a princi-  
 pal hand in destroying themselves and the land by their  
 sin. Others know not what to confess, nor how to fur-  
 ther this work of conviction upon themselves.

Therefore it will be best to come a little to you in your  
 relations and stations with this charge, and seeing it plea-  
 seth the Lord now to speak to you, and ye know not how  
 long, or whether he shall speak to you by us again. I  
 exhort you to take to heart the things that I am to charge  
 upon you, and every one as he finds himself, set some  
 time apart to mourne before God and to seek for pardon  
 and peace.

The first sort I shall speak to, is to our selves who are  
 Ministers of the Gospel. We cannot deny but our hand  
 hath been deep in the desolation and destruction that  
 hath come upon the Lords Israel, and though the Lords  
 people have had that much charity, as to clear us, yet

God forbid, that we clear our selves. Many Pastors have destroyed the Lords vinyard, through their transgressions and sins. And while I am speaking to our own sins, who are the Lords Ministers, let none think that we are laying open their wickedness to their contempt, I know no way like this to make them honourable, to search out their sin, and to be humbled for it before the Lord.

The first thing I charge on them is this, that we have had a carnal way in managing all his matters, we have taken our own prudential gate of binding things on people, and have laid more weight on these than on the ordinances of God, and the spirits working and backing them, and that both in Doctrine, and in the exercise of Discipline, and our not laying weight on his ordinances as divine; and his spirits presence and blessing promised to make them effectual, hath made his work take small effect among our hands.

2. We have been more careful to stock our selves with matter of our work, than to bring fresh influences out of heaven to make his work taking, beautiful, and glorious; and every word we spake had been more savoury and refreshful with the people, if we had dipped our hearts in heavens influences; because we have not sought after this, but have only studied words, and to make up purpose, and have not laid the stress of our work upon the spirit, and on his divine influences, in the convey of these things we delivered, it hath made our work so much the more fruitless.

3. It hath been our sin, if we got our work off our hand with credit, and were born out in the delivery of our message to the people, we did not follow it with prayer, and seek after it. It hath not been so vexing to us after as before. Why? because we cared more for our own credit, than for the peoples profiting; a sin for which

which the Lord hath judged us not fit to bear office in his house.

4. We may be charged with self-seeking and envying others, that were like to darken us; though we have seemed to be blyth to hear such a man commended, yet it hath stuck to our heart, and hath afterward vented it self in our censures, which tells, we never desired another to come our length, at least to outstrip us; so far have we been from that disposition to rejoice, if Christ were preached, and at the increasing of others, though we should decrease. This amongst others hath helped to shut us out of our Ministry.

5. We may be charged with much worldly mindedness, we have not given our selves wholly to these things of our Ministry. I do not say, that every one is alike guilty of this, or of the rest; yet some are guilty of one thing, and some of another; some in one degree, & some in another, and there hath been a great deal of carnality amongst us all. Can any of us say, that the care of the Church hath lyen upon us, or that the care of souls, that we have had under our charge hath had the weight on us it should have had. We have not commended our selves to every mans Conscience, nor have we become all things to all men, that we might gain some; nor have we made it our work to seek that which is driven away, and to bind that which was broken; neither have the souls conditions of these who were going over the bray lyen heavy upon us, till they were reclaimed; we were not burnt nor scalded with the stumbling of any, that was the least part of our work; fra once we got a gate of them by publick censures, we troubled not our head with them any more.

6. What ever hath been our diligence and duty, it hath not been our meat and drink to do the will of our master, and to finish his work with delight and pleasure,

sure; we have wearied of it. And many precious Ministers of the Gospel longed for dimission, and would have been glad many times to have been laid by, therefore God hath granted them their desire, and hath laid them by, and though they would be glad to speak again in his name, they are justly deferred of that opportunity, till they know and acknowledge their iniquity, and be ashamed of it.

7. May it not be said, as the word is. *Jer. 10. 2.* The Pastors generally were become brutish, therefore have they been smitten, and the flocks scattered; so little religion hath appeared in the practice of many Ministers, that ye should not have known them by other men, by their carriage, if their habit had not spoken it. Would God that sad word might not be applyed to many Ministers in our time, that prophanity hath gone out from them, which hath taught the people to be prophane.

8. We have been more busy in strife and contention to strengthen factions, and to hold up our side in controverted things; than busied with the work of converting souls to God. These and many more things may be charged on us; but there is enough here to make us ashamed and therefore you who are the Ministers of Christ, and have the honour to speak in his name, know that unto you is that word spoken. *Jer. 12. 10.* Many Pastors have destroyed my vineyard, and have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness. Take time a part and together to think on these things. Charge yourselves with them, and confess them to God when you meet, and your alone mourn over them before him, who hath justly shut us out of his house, as unworthy to bear office therein, and yet acknowledge, that the Lord hath dealt mercifully with us in this matter, for when he might have done it

on some horride account for scandalous transgressions he hath laid us by on an honourable account of sufferings for him, because he hath found some sincerity in us. And when he hath humbled the Ministers of Scotland, who are laid by, as useles, I hope he shall yet take service off their hands; but we would know, that his voice, and the voice of his rod now is, Ministers, go preach to your selves, because ye did not preach to your selves before, and if we take with our sin, and get our peace made with him, it may be he make us yet polished shafts in his hand; and if not, here we are, let him do to us what seemeth good to him; however sure I am, it is present duty to set some time apart for confession of, and mourning over sin; and if we do so, it shall be vvell vvith us, howvver matters go.

2. The second sort I vvould speak to, is to you vvho are Elders and Deacons, ye have helped to destroy the Lords people, and to lay his pleasant portion desolate, therefore God hath loosed your cords by your sin; and made void your authority, and remarkably he lighted first on you, and shut you all to the door together, not that I aim at your guilt more than our own, but I would have you lay to heart your transgressions, & wish I could further you to a through conviction of your sin in order to your peace, and Gods being pacified towards you, and his people. Can ye say that the souls and bodies of the Lords people hath lyen upon your heart? that it hath been a part of your business to hold up their case to God, and to have them reclaimed, and brought into him? did ye think it not enough, if ye delated a fault, when it came to your knowledge, and when ye had done, ye thought your selves exonerated and free? did ye not manage your work with carnal weapons, mixing your wilde fire with the zeal of God, boasting of the people of the Lord, ruling



over them with rigour and force, disengaging them by your counsels and reproofs: have ye taken conscientious inspection of these places respectively put under your charge? have ye distribute to the poor with bowels of mercy? what account could many of you give of their condition, if ye should be put to it? And give me leave to tell you, that your worldly mindedness, your greed and covetousness, your lying and deceit, your breach of promises and engagements, your tipling, and carnal walking hath taught the people prophanity. When ye made no conscience of your words, how should they? when ye abstained not from a Tavern, was it not a snare to them to follow? And therefore, I nothing doubt, I do you any wrong to charge you with destroying the Lords vineyard. I shall not insist on your sins; but if ye would search your selves, confess your sins, set time apart to mourn over them before God, ye might comfort your selves, hat this day ye suffer not as evil doers, but for his names sake; and happy are ye, if ye continue in adhering to him, his truth and cause. But let me obtest you, let men speak of Conventicles, we have another thing to look to than their Acts, and things of that kind: set time apart, your selves apart, and your wives apart, and meet together and confess and mourn over your sins. O if I could perswade you to this, I do nothing doubt, but ye should yet live to bear honourable charge in the house of God.

A third sort I would speak to are those who are more eminent amongst the people. We have not any Nobles, and God be thanked for it, they have little credit who have most of them; neither would I have you to think; that I mean of any particular Gentleman, in what I am to speak. We have not a considerable Gentleman in all the Parish; but any of you that are more eminent than others, take it to you, and I would charge you with some things,

things, that I would have you (in so far as ye are guilty) convinced of and mourning before the Lord and amending. The first thing, that I charge on you Gentles is, that when ever Christ or his cause had ought to do, ye sent out the blind, the halt and the lame, the prophanest Runagates to fight for the cause, and I wish that there were not ground to say of some, that they should have some males in their flock, and yet send out the blind, the halt and the lame in their room, and the consequence of this was often told you, the miscarriages of the armies did so stumble the Lords people in other lands, that it hath holden up, and yet holds up jealousies betwixt the godly in both nations to this day, that they can think on nothing unaminously. 2. I charge you with oppression, and grinding the faces of the poor. I know ye will startle at the naming of this, but I cannot help it. I dare say ye have used you Brethren as your slaves, and made their lives bitter unto them. I do not justify their undutiful carriage to you here, neither would I have you think I reflect on your credit, to tell you your sin: Your Consciences will justify your Ministers, that it hath been a part of our work to hold up your credit and conscience, and would have sweetned the lives of the poor bodies under you. I know ye will say, they would not be the better, though ye should give them down of their rent; but will ye once use this mean to better them; Convince them that ye are merciful, and if they be not better, put them from you. Is it not lamentable, that every bit of Land ye have racked to the utmost value, so that your Tennants cannot get your rent payed, and bread to keep in their lives for their labour. I know ye will be loath to be convinced of this, though Gods dealing with you may convince you more than my speaking to you, had not your forbears less rent, and less Land, and richer Tennants

Tennants? And yet ye are blind and will not see God threatning to cast out of your lap your dishonest gain; yea to cast yourselves out of the Land, and from your habitations. O that ye would be perswaded to look to God in this, and lay your heads together, and consult how this ill might be helped. 3. I may justly charge you with this, that ye bring up your Sons in vanity; will our Gentles now put their Children to callings? No, as if that were a discredit to them, and their Credit that they should live in idleness, and then they turn Malignants, and Persecutors of the Godly, drunkards, Theeves, and whoore masters, men that will neither do well, nor let others do well where ever they come, but are a pest in every socity where they come. Sure I am, it were more credit for you and them both, to have them bred at some honest Calling, than to have them slaying men in other Countries, or trailing a pick to fight against the *Turk*, or coming through the Countrey, as some of them are daily with their Testimonials seeking our charity, or begging from door to door 4. may I not charge many houses of our Gentry, for being nests of uncleanness, cages of unclean birds, so that if any sober man should come into them, they should not think they have been bred under Gospel light: & is not this a horrid reproach upon you? 5. May I not charge you with this, that now and then ye fall out in your unhappy fits of passion, in cursing, banning and swearing, and are not ashamed of this? There are not many of them now a dayes, but ask, what he is? He is a Gentleman indeed, but he is very passionat, and given to banning and swearing, and on that can let an oath flee. But I have not skill of that mans Religion, who bridles not his tongue; Sure I am, the Spirit of God calls that mans Religion vain *Iam. 1. 26.* It is true, ye have had a respect to Ministers, and some of you have

carried a great respect to them on some account ; but did ye lay as great weight on, & had ye as great respect to their message? Hath not that been undervalued by you, as if there had been another gate for you to heaven, than for poor folk ; and what care we for your respect to us, whilst ye slight our message? 6. May ye not be charged for want of Charity? Have ye opened your hand to the poor & needy? I fear your charity may be soon counted and reckoned from one years end to another ; ye will give your plack at the Church door, and your almes at your gate, but have ye searched for poor & needy Objects ; this should have adorned Religion more than many other things, that better might have been forborn. 7. May ye not also be charged for want of zeal to the cause of God? Especially of late have ye not been so afraid for your lives & states which was impavnd for the cause that is now overthrown? Nay, I lay it upon your Conscience, if ye thought this a duty incumbent for you, the Lord knows I intend not to lay open your nakedness, but rather to set you in a way to make you honourable ; and what is that? Even to lay to heart your sin, and take time to mourn over it, and make your peace with God. ye get now and then visits from Ministers make use of them, set some time a part, and make earnest of it, for words will not do it ; and when ye have mourned over your evils, set about the mending of them, as I fear your sad dayes be but coming yet. I know, ye will think ye know the worst of it, and that is compliance. I confess, that is the worst of it at present, but there is worse coming ; if ye comply, ye shall not escape Gods wrath, and if ye mourn not, though ye comply not, ye shall not escape that wrath that abideth impenitents, and ye may ere long be shaken out of your worldly inheritance. And is there not much need then that ye should have your peacemade with God, and the

lively hope of heaven as an antidot against that ?

4. A fourth sort is the body of the people. I know you have assented to all that have been asserted against Ministers & Gentlemen, and it is like ye are glad to hear such Doctrine, but have ye not also destroyed the Lords vine yard, & laid his pleasant portion desolat by our sins. 1. I charge you with deceitfulness, & over reaching one another, with covetousness and worldly mindedness, and a spirit of contention flowing from your covetousness, so that for a pluck of grass, and a beast going over the merch, ye have taken up a standing quarrel for year and day. And have they not taken ten times more of you to whom ye were not so much beholden, and ye durst not say it was ill done? and yet ye did not consider, nor take it from the Lord, as a chastisement for your contention on so feckless grounds. 2. May I not charge you with complaining, grudging, whinnying and whispering, for the little that was taken from you, for upholding the cause and Covenant of God, and for paying Ministers stipends, and it may be ye shall lay more out on a worse account to them who will give you no thanks for it. It may be, ye would now give out your money to keep up the Gospel, but it will not be bought with money. 3. I charge you for not taking the Gospel off our hands, we tell you, that God is now giving up treating vwith you for this, ye have come to hear, but ye have returned your prophane gates. I know your tipling, lying, banning and swearing, your scorning of the Godly, your Sabbath breaking, envy, malice, disrespect to Ministers, for all your fashions, and will ye not be convinced and ashamed for these things? 4. I charge you for having a cruel hatred at Gentlemen, and for contempt of them and others above you; your freting and undutiful carriage hath been palpable. I wish you had subjected your selves more cheerfully.



Take time and meet together, and your alone, and mourn over these sins, and many more, and seek Gods mercy. I have known several of your meetings, when there was less reason. I know not how ye have fallen from them now. Will ye fall to them again, and do all seriously with God, that he may pity you and yours.

5. I have some what to say to Servants; do ye know, that ye have destroyed the Lords vineyard, and have had a hand in all the evils lying on his people. I charge you with these things. 1. That ye have not received the Gospel, though we have mourned over you with tears; ye have never made earnest of making your peace with God; and know ye not that he is now giving up treating with such Rebels? 2. Think upon your prophane carriage, your filthy words and sports, your lascivious, wanton & graceless way of conversing, your pride and vanity occasioned through Gods goodness, and a cheap year; fulness of bread hath so puffed you up, that ye misken your station; ye must have word about with those that are over you, and the world doth not bear your pride, which appears in your apparel, other things we will not name. I put it to your Conscience, have ye done your Masters work as your own? have ye taken their rebukes & reproofs without snuffing and answering again? nay rather, was not, and is not your pride such, as that ye doth not bear a word? but ere long ye shall bear more with them, to whom ye were not so much obliged, and dare not speak again. In a word, ye was well, and wist not, ye say, ye had no liberty to serve God, but lye not to God; in all the world there is not a place, wherein servants have had more liberty to serve God, than in this *West-Country*. 3. May I not charge you men-servants, who were pitched upon, that ye shifted to go out and fight the  
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Lords battells, for the cause and Covenant of God, to which ye were bound as well as Ministers and Gentlemen, and it may be, ye be forced to harle a pick to a battel, where the quarrel will not be so clear. Servants, I speak to you, have ye not reason, considering these things, and many moe, to take time and mourn for your sins, whereby ye have destroyed the Lords Vineyard? Ye will say, ye have no time; but let me say it, I fear ye shall get time enough ere long. God will give you the Sabbath-day, ere ye have that excuse, and on your silent Sabbaths mourn, if ye have a heart to mourn.

6. And lastly, I shall speak a few things to the Godly, And O that I could perswade you, that ye have helped to destroy the Lords Vineyard. And it is the provocations of his Sons and of his Daughters, that have brought this destruction on Israel. It is true, he is angry at Ministers, Elders and Deacons, Gentlemen, Commons and Servants as such. But it is as true, that he hath another quarrel at all in these stations and relations, who are Godly, and as such; and who knowes, but he hath reserved you for such a day, that ye might venture your life as *Hester*, in going to the King: that which I mean is, that ye may go in and wrestle with God for removing of wrath. Ye are persons, who have had moyen with God, but it has not been improven; and I have more to charge you with, than my memory can reach, or time will permit to lay before you. But 1. I charge you with falling from your first love, evidenced by falling from your former diligence. 2. I charge you, that ye are turned formal in all your religious performances: Alas! that ye understand not better the voice of that late rod of Sectaries upon you, who cryed down all formes, to make you more cordial, rather than to turn more formal in all duties

of worship. 3. I charge you with slothfulness, in giving to the Lord the refuse of your time; he gets but fitts and starts of you, after or betwixt turnes. It was a great word in that man, *I will not serve the Lord with that which cost me nothing.* 2.Sam.24. 24. Is not Religion one main clause of the Covenant? why then are ye so slothful and overly in all religious performances? 4. I charge you with worldly mindedness, so that I defy any to draw a straw betwixt you and many others that know not God, as to this thing. Covetousness hath overwhelmed all, so that it is turned into a common saying, he is a Godly man, but he is right greedy; there is no halt as to the gathering of gear, except in the poor, who cannot get it. 5. I charge you with prevailing passions, and inordinat affections to every Idol, that comes in your way. Are ye not as soon sadled, and as soon angry and in a passion and drow bear as little, as these in nature? are ye not ready to flee in fire at every word that thorters you? 6. I charge you with pride and self conceit, and despising them that comes not up your measure, therefore God threatens to level you ere long. 7. I charge you with unbelief and ignorance of God and his Word, so that I dare say, there's not a Christian among an hundred that believeth this Bible to be the Word of God, so as to lay more weight on a threatning and a ground of challenge from it, than on the bark of a dog, notwithstanding of a large dispensation of means, and for so long a time. You have sitten down on poor probabilities of an interest in Christ: but there is not one among many fixed in it. How many of you are under heart condemning? Though God hath been telling you the evils every day, wherefore he contends, whiles by his word, and whiles by your conscience, yet ye amend not. And do ye think that God can abide with his Gospel? ye may make din and say,  
what

what will we do, if we want it? But what have ye done with it? It is to be feared that many of you would live as well without it as Atheists. 8: The true substantials of Religion are decayed, as 1. True tenderness under challenges: the time has been when ye would have been challenged for an idle word, and mourned over it, but now not for fourteen idle deeds, neither can ye mourn. 2. Tenderness in Conscience is much decayed, ye are not so tender as to start at a straw, as ye were wont to do. 3. Where is that searching out of promises, and the application of them to events, I dare say, many of you some few years ago had ten times more promises than ye have this day, and for applying of all that fall's out to some Scripture, to make out that all his wayes are mercy and truth to his own. Is not that much gone, though by it ye used to hold in your life? 4. There was also a benfil to edify others, but where is that gone now? 5. Where is that vounted zeal against sin, and for the glory of God? Surely in this trial, God hath taken us vvith our back at the vvall. 6. Add the abuse and neglect of your Christian Fellowship, which hath provoked God to scatter you. But I insist no further. May I think ye will set time apart to mourn over these evils, and seek for grace to get them helped? And O that I could perswade you. Sure I am, considering these things, all ranks will justify the Lord in all that he hath done: but what will all we have said, avail, if it be not taken off our hand, however I shall take heaven and earth to witness, that I have charged these things upon you, and yet, I say not, on you, but on us all; and I would fain hope, that we will take some time to the through conviction of them on our spirits, and mourn over them before the Lord. If ye do, I dare promise in his name, he will hear, and give an outgate; if no:, your bands shall grow stronger. I shall say no

more; but if Israel were thoroughly convinced, that he hath destroyed himself, there were hope that in him were Israels help, which, if we get time and opportunity to speak, shall be shewed to you, even that notwithstanding we have destroyed our selves, yet there is hope of help in him.

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## S E R M O N 2.

*Hosea 13. 9. But in me is thy help.*

**I**T would seeme that the Lord in his Providence hath so ordered things, and drawn them to such a period, that he intended I should close the Scripture of *Matthew*, before I should leave you, that thereby you might learn some what of the Doctrine of the Cross, and of the hazard of relinquishing his cause. I did scarce look to have got leave to give an account of that Scripture to the end; and when that was done, that he had but two other words to speak to you by me; one word anent your sin, and that ye are your own overthrow, and that God is not to be blamed for it: and another word anent your help and relief, that though it be so, that you are the cause of your own ruine, and that you have destroyed your self, yet you are bound to hope for relief in him, when there is no other to help you. It seemes that God had these two words to speak to you, which no man or power could hinder, till these were delivered.

Ye have heard to what a low condition the Church may be brought, and what ever hand God may have in it, and advertaries that are instruments of it, yet her members



members are chiefly to be blamed for their own overthrow : And God will have all sorts and ranks of persons Noblemen and Gentlemen, bond and free, rich and poor, Ministers and people, Godly and ungodly particularly convinced of these sins, where of they are guilty, whereby they have destroyed themselves, and the Church ; so that he hath not left himself without a witness, and happy shall he be, who shall bear the impression of these ay till he come.

Now the other word he hath to speak to you is, *But in me is thy help.* If the first word have left a deep impression upon your heart, I could with much confidence speak to the second. These words are not only a ground of encouragement to the poor people of God, the remnant in their low condition ; but they are also a vindication of the Majesty of God, that he is free of their destruction, and not to be blamed for it.

We shall speak of them, first, as they are a vindication of the Majesty of God, that he is not to be blamed for their destruction, *but in me is thy help.* The words may be rendred in the by past time, *but in me is thy help* : so any evill that is upon you, ye may blame your self for it, for in me thy help hath been, and yet still is.

Here observe, that the Lord hath left abundant testimonies and witnesses at his peoples door, that he is not to be blamed for their destruction, or for any misery, calamity or sorrovv, that is upon them, for in me thy help hath been, I have been ay good to you, I appeal to your ovvn consciences, vvwhether or not I have helped you many times, vvhen ye have been lovv, and vvwhether or not I have given you many favourable casts of my hand, so that ye have no cause to blame me. God is sitting free vvith his people, that he is not to be blamed, these Scripture and the like prove it, vvherein

have I wearied thee ? have I been a wilderness to you ? hitherto hath God helped.

In prosecuting this Doctrine, I shall shew you.  
 1. What wayes people do reflect upon and blame him in their condition. 2. What Testimonies God hath to produce for himself at the hand of his Church, especially at the hand of his Church of Israel, that he is not to be blamed, which will be very applicable to us. 3. Why did the Lord (who is not tyed to render an account of his wayes) condescend so far as to satisfy his people, in shewing them that he is not to be blamed.

To the first, What wayes do people reflect upon God and blame him. Ans. 1. When they reflect upon his providence, when they are under any stroak or misery brought on themselves, by their own sin; as thus, if the Lord had not done such things to me, it would not have been so with me, this did befall me in his providence, and I could not win by it. This was that which Adam began with, and is a clause irritant in his family since. *Hast thou eaten of the tree saith God, whereof I commanded thee thou shouldest not eat ? Who is to be blamed for that ? The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.* I am not to be blamed, but you, and her; thou gavest me her (indeed, I got a bonny bird that morning I got her) and she gave it me. So we blame God when we blame his providence for what we do. 2. When they reflect upon his predetermining Counsels, as thus, this was even ordained for me, before coat or shirt were shapen for me. It is the language in the 9. Chapt. to the Romans, *who hath resisted his will ? who could help it, since he decreed it ? I say, the plague of God shall be upon you, though you cannot resist that will, for your blaming it.* 3. When they reflect upon his free grace and mercy. Some thing of this is hinted at Ps. 77. 8. 9. *is his mercy clean gone for ever ? hath he forgotten*

you? be gracious? Free grace might have helped this; though I be an undeserving man, what the matter; if free grace had given me a cast by the common? I have no more grace than God hath given me, which is as much to say, if grace had done its part, I might have been kept from this evil hour. 4. When they reflect upon the faithfulness of God, though some dare not speak it out, yet it is in their heart; there is a word to this purpose Ps. 77. 8. *doth his promise faile for evermore?* when folk do question the truth of his promises; this ye would beware of now: For folk are in hazard to question the truth of his promises, in reference to his publick work. This purpose is that of *Jeremiah, Jer. 20. 7. O Lord thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived, and why art thou unto me as a liar?* These are dreadful words of the Creature to the Creator, as if he had not infinite wayes to make out his promises, that we cannot take up. 5. When they reflect upon his Justice, severity and peremptoriness in smiting of his people. There is a word in one of the Prophets that runs to this purpose, if we be destroyed, how can we live? which is on the matter this. If God so deal with us, there is no living, or being with him; he will not let folk away with the knot of a straw, but he dings them down. When folk hears that God smiteth for this and for that, their heart riseth in passion, and saith, that there is no dallying with him, let him alone, for many have lived with him, and stood before him, and he will not make new lawes, nor ordain new vvayes to follow, neither for your pleasure nor mine.

2, What hath the Lord to say for his own vindication at the hands of his Church, especially at the hands of Israel, to prove that he is not to be blamed for their destruction, and the misery that comes on them. Ans. 1. God had this to say to Israel for his own vindication, that

that he had chosen them out of all the Nations of the World, without any thing in them previous to the choice, that might have engaged and influenced him so did he reason with them *Deut. 7. 7. 8.* *The Lord did not for his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people, for ye were the fewest of people: but because the Lord loved you.* If the Lord had a mind to drag you down, and destroy you; and had delighted in that, he would not have brought you out of that blind condition, wherein ye were lying with the rest of the world, but he would have left you a few blind moles drowning your selves in your sin. 2. He had this for himself to say, that he had brought them from the slavery and bondage of *Egypt*, in which they had ruined themselves by their sin, after that he had chosen them, he had ay this to say for his own clearing what ever came upon them, that he was their God that redeemed them from the Land of *Egypt*, so that if he had delighted in their destruction, he would have left them there, and suffered them to run to the Devil with the *Egyptians*, and never owned them nor delivered them. 3. He had this to say for himself, that he had entred into a Covenant with them in the wilderness, after he had brought them out of *Egypt*, which privilege he had denyed to any considerable incorporation before that time; what ever he had done to some particular persons and families, yet he never formally entred in Covenant with any great incorporation, but with them. 4. He had this to say for himself, that he had done many Miracles, and wrought many wonders among them; he had shewed them marvellous and strange Acts and great signes and wonders, after he had chosen them in *Egypt*, and before and after he had formally entred into Covenant with them, for their confirmation and establishing, that he dang down every power

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power that had lift up it self against them; what bec-  
him have done this, if he had delighted in their de-  
struction? 5. He had this to say for himself, that he  
had delivered them from many inconveniences; that he  
reproved Kings for their sake, and suffered no man to  
do them wrong; that he smote Kings, and mighty  
Kings, Og King of *Bashan*, and *Sihon* King of the *A-*  
*morites*; he never spared great nor small, whilst they  
abode with him, but he carried still as their husband  
and Lord; this sufficiently clears him from bearing  
the blame of their ruine. 6. He had this to say, that  
he kept abundance of light amongst them, for to shew  
them their duty, that they might know what was the  
way of peace and life; many Prophets did he send them,  
who late and early did admonish, rebuke, & teach them,  
so that it was not for want of light & counsel that they  
went wrong, they had enough of that, this sufficiently  
cleared him. 7. He had this to say, that many times  
he had forewarned them of their skaith, whence it  
should come, and by what, and had made them consent  
and submit to their own destruction, if ever they should  
go that black gate he had forewarned them of. Now,  
saith God, I have told you the right way, & ye may lippen  
to me in walking therein, and I have also told you the  
wrong way, that will bring you down, & bring you under  
these folks feet that are your enemies, if ever ye make  
Covenant with them, I vow and swear, I shall be full of  
your flesh, and they were so far convinced of the equity  
of this, that they consented to their own ruine, if ever  
they should do it, if ever we joyn with the people of  
these abominations, let God consume us from off the  
earth. If ever we take these thieves again by the hand,  
let the wrath of God pursue us, the heavy hand of God  
be upon us, that is a strong vindication of him. 8. He  
had this to say, that notwithstanding of all they had  
done



done against him, he took Heaven and Earth to witness he would accept of a little small thing at their hands. Run ye to, and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and now and know, and seek in the broad places, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment and seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it. Jer. 5. 1. Only acknowledge thine iniquity. Jer. 3. 13. Do but this, I will pass by all bygones, will ye do but this, and I shall defy all the thieves to get you down, but I shall be about with them.

3. Wherefore doth the great God of Heaven so confess, and as it were to vindicate himself so at the hands of poor unworthy wormes? he is not bound to give an account of his matters, or to render a reason of his wayes; for who may say unto him what dost thou? Ans. 1. He doth it for the glory of his Justice. Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest. I clear thy justice of all that is come upon me. God will not leave any ground to reflect on that. 2. For the glory of his grace and mercy, which his people are ready to reflect upon: but I referre to your selves to judge, whether or not I have been merciful, O ye Inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. I referre it to your selves and all the world, whether or not you deserve strokes, and whether or not I can spare you longer. 3. That he may the more effectually bind his peoples sin upon them, whereby they have destroyed themselves, and convince them of the evil of their own way, and of their folly.

Use 1. Lo here the daring boldness of the corruption of men, that dare reflect upon God, and blame him for the miseries, calamities and sorrow that befall them; we have this legacy left us by our Father Adam, who

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who blamed the holy God for his fall; we have a spice of this from him, although we will not speak it out: yet we think it often in our hearts. If God had not carved out things to be so, and so, they could not have been; you are not to meddle with that, for he is holy in all his Counsels, though it be so, but you are to be ashamed of your sins, for it is they that are the cause of your destruction. Take heed of blaming the Majesty of God, if there be any apprehension in you to do it, suppress it and bear it down.

Use 2. Know that the Lord hath abundant testimonies lying at our doors, as well as at Israels, that he is not to be blamed for our overthrow, but we our selves are to be blamed; he hath this to say, that he did set his love upon us, and gave these ends of the earth to his Son, for his Inheritance, and that he tooke infestment of them, and that he took us by the hand, not for any thing in us, for we were but a pack of poor Beggars, in respect of other Nations, and that he brought us out of *Egypt* from Heathenish, Papistical, and prelatical bondage: and when we were all running the black gate, with the Bishops, and running to black darkness, he brought us back again; and that he entred in Covenant never more formally with any Nation than with us; and many great and glorious things he wrought for us, that he gave us many victories, and reprov'd many both great and small who opposed us, for our sake, all which we hope to be but an earnest of what is to follow, and that he told us of our duty, and of his way, and warn'd us what would be our ruine. He told us, if ever we break Covenant, and joyned with the malignant party, and put them in places of Trust, and made them Captains and Officers of our Armies; they should be our ruine; and we consented to this, and put in our Declaration, that even when there should be

be scarcitie of men, we should not do it, not only in offensive wars, (as some do distinguish) but in defensive wars. We said, God forbid, that even in the scarcitie of men we should split upon that rock, and that we should joyne with these abominations, and yet we never rested till we made them Captains and Officers of our Armies and joyned with them; God forgive them that brought them in, and forgive us also that suffered them to be brought in. I dare say also, that God would take little off our hand, that he may be about with these thieves; faine would he be at them, and have a fair occasion to be full of their flesh, who have so shamefully broken his Covenant, & spit upon his face. well I wot he would take little off our hands. however he hath many Testimonies lying at our door, that he is free of our ruine. O but we had been a happy people, if we had been bidden by him. Many things also hath he to say to vindicate himself of at the hands of his people, which would take a long day to tell. he hath this to say, that he hath holden out to you many a time, what is the way of Truth, and the way of peace, and piety wherein ye should walk, and that clearly; you have not fallen in an evil condition for want of light, and that your idols have overmastered you. For want of that he hath this to say, that he hath not ceased to be a reprover to you, though ye have trampled upon reproofs, yet hath he made your Conscience challenge you out and in. He hath this to say, that you never set your self seriously to seek God, but ye got worth your pains, and met you mid way and more. you never set your selves so, that ye were at a point; ye would have some what in this prayer. or else ye should lay it by: but he met you. *he meeteth him who rejoiceth and worketh righteousness.* No sooner put ye up the sails, but he put wind in them. That is a Testimony, that he is not to be blamed. He hath this to say, give me the tithes and offerings, as ye were

wount to do, and see whether or not I will rain down a blessing. Give me the ancient tale of duty, and see whether or not I will come and bless you. He hath this to say, that he hath sufficiently discovered the vanity of that, which is the ground of the quarrell betwixt him and you. he hath convinced you that he hath made your business thrive, as well when ye gave him the due tale of duty, and did not clip them, and better too, than when ye did otherwise, tis but dassing for folk to slip prayer, that they may win soon out to the plough, or harvest-rig; if they do, God may break some soome or coulter, or some other thing in the plough, or the hook where-with they shear, or make some accident to besal them, that they shall lose more time for their worldly gain, than all the time that prayer would have taken up to them. It is in vain for you to rise up early and sit up late, and eat the bread of sorrows, for so he giveth his beloved sleep. God can give his people that make conscience of the duties of Religion their ful of rest, and make their work go on also. Again, he hath this witness against you, that there is some thing he hath been contending with you for, and desiring you to quite and forsake, and yet ye would not do it for him. Ye know well enough what it is, 'tis even the thing ye know of, what is the reason ye will not mend it? it is some thing that hath cleaved to you this year, and the other year, and severall years had ye done but this for me (as if the Lord would say) and forgone this little petty thing for me, I should have made your peace run down as a river. upon your Conscience be it, whether or not I offered it good cheap to you, if ye would give but a little more paines, and for give a little small thing that ye know well enough what it is for, I will not tell you what it is, I think it not worth the naming, ye should have had peace and perfect peace. It is a sore matter, that we should still keep in our vexation &c

disquietness, which is all, because we will not forsake the thing we know of. I say then, God hath the right end of the string, come of us all what will, he is free of our ruine. Let us therefore justify him, and vindicate his justice, and free grace, for it hath done what it could do, with credit and honesty to the Court of Heaven. Let us therefore take with our sins, and blame our selves, for we have destroyed our selves.

We come now to the words, as they are an encouragement, and a ground of hope for the future, but in me thy help shall be; so the word may be rendred, not only have I ay done you good, but I can yet help, and I will help you, for all that is come upon you. I shall once help you in spite of their hearts that would bear you down. Here observe two doctrines, 1. In the lowest condition the Church of God and Israel can be in, God can help, there is help in God, if he please to put it out for Israel. Thou by thy sin hast destroyed thy self, and these folk as Instruments have broken you all, and dung you all down, and they think ye can never be raised up again, but for as low as ye are, I can help you, for all things are possible with God, even these things, that are impossible with men; he doth whatsoever pleaseth him in Heaven and in Earth, being King of Kings and Lord of Lords; he is higher than the highest. Our God can deliver us, say the three Children, yea he will deliver us; they were as low as we are, they had the King and all the Court about them, and ready to cast them into a fiery furnace made ready also for them, which also they did, and yet God delivered them. I do not think that ye question this in your judgment, that God can deliver; yet before I speak to the other doctrine, that saith God will deliver you, I shall shew you some wayes wherein God can help his people in their lowest condition, and in cny  
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of these wayes God can help us, if he please. 1. He can help his people by destroying them, by that he makes them happy evermore; in death he makes them Conquerors; he makes them say of the bitter afflictions and strokes, that it is good for me that I was afflicted. He teacheth and instructeth them out of his Law by his chastening them. 2. He can help them by his admirable bearing them up, and supporting them in their condition, by staying his rough wind in the day of his East wind, correcting them in measure and judgment, even when he seemes to make the waters run over them and overflow them, though he brings them through the fire and water, yet he brings them through: he takes away the sting of the rod and affliction. and bears them up under it. 2. He can help them, by casting their help in the ordinary channel, by ordinary means and instruments, even when their case is very low, and seems to be desperat, as to an outgate, and there is no man for help appearing, within a short time he can cast their help in the ordinary channel. Ye are, it may be, thinking, that God must work a miracle before we can be helped; but he can put our help in the ordinary channel very soon, as he did in the year thirty eighth, when he threw down the Prelats. He can cause the spirit descend upon his people, and great Saviours on mount Zion, and put it in the hearts of his people to arise, to the raising of his interests, cause, Covenant, Ordinances and work; he can raise up seven Shepherds, and eight principal men. 3. He can do it in an extraordinary manner, he can creat help, he shall creat help for me, saith David, creat deliverance for Israel, is a prayer of faith that it should be, and God shall send down help immediatly from Heaven, he will order all things as they are remaining, God will work wonders, but he will be about with these folk, and help his people.

Use 1. The people of God should not despair, though their condition seems to be irrecoverable. It seemeth so to you, but it is not so to God; the things that are impossible to men are not impossible to God. What the matter, though God ding us all down, if he will do good to our souls, and teach us out of his law? what the matter though we ly under these folks feet for aev time? he will make our worst condition best. What the matter though we want the publick ordinances for a while, if he prove a little Sanctuary to us? and if ye get your lesson taught by the Master himself, whos is an Interpreter, one of a thousand, not only amongst the threes, but above them all. What the matter though he blow up all outward worldly helps, seeinge we have a prooffe of their emptiness, & seeing he can help either in an ordinary, or extraordinary channel? Leto us never be discouraged, and tyne heart; if the heart be gone, all is gone.

## S E R M O N 3.

*Hosea 13. 9. But in me is thy help.*

**I** Come now to the third Doctrine, That the Church of God in her lowest condition, may warrantably look and wait for help from God. Not only can he help, but she is obliged to wait for it. Take only that Scripture to prove it. Ps 130. last v. Let Israel hope in the Lord for ever and ever, that day can never dawn, neither can that case befall Israel, wherein he is not obliged to hope; and if to hope, then to look for help from God.

In speaking to this I shall speak to these things.  
ought. Shortly to the low condition whereinto the Church  
emay be brought. 2. What grounds of hope hath the  
Church in her lowest condition to look for help from  
God. 3. What conditions are required in a Church,  
all which may warrantably look for help from God. 4. How  
whar was this promise verified to the Church of the  
for Jewes. 5. Whether or not it be applicable to the Church  
What *Brittain and Ireland.*

s for To the first, The low condition into which the  
nd iChurch may be brought. 1. She may be defaced both  
whos to her Civil and Ecclesiastick Government, the au-  
thority of both may be loosed, and the people of God  
tter may be as scattered bones about the graves mouth, and  
eingew of their own resent this.

help 2. What are the grounds upon which the Church is  
Leto expect help, when thus made low, and there is none  
rt beo help. Ans. The Covenant is one ground, you must  
understand, that God hath made a Covenant with this  
Church, which is everlasting and perpetual, that he  
will do such and such things for her, even a Covenant  
of peace, which shall not be removed. And of the Tribe  
of *Levi* he hath said, that it shall not want a man to offer  
an offering to the Lord for ever: as *David* shall not  
want a man to sit on his Throne, which is verified in  
Christ; so the Tribe of *Levi* shall not want a man to  
minister before the Lord from generation to genera-  
tion; when they were in a low condition, he said, I  
will remember my Covenant. Many a black thing did  
the Covenant keep off, and in another place, I will do  
such and such things to you, after all your whordoms  
and adulteries, but not by thy Covenant. God hath  
wayes of making out his Covenant that we have no  
skill of; he hath a pose, and a little purse keeping in his  
Covenant, that many do not see. Indeed folk that have

cast off the Covenant, and have burnt it by the hand of the Hangman, will get sore bones, and sore souls also but as for these that cleave to it, they may expect help on that ground. *Hos. 2. 19. I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, in loving kindness & in mercy*, not only in righteousness, I will not only do thee all that Law bind a husband to do for a wife, but I will give thee a call by the Common, I will betroth thee in loving kindness and in mercy. 2. A second ground is the headship and suretyship of Christ under which he is come by an everlasting Covenant of Redemption betwix him and his Father, once have I sworn to *David* (good honest *David* understanding Christ who never wronged man) his seed shall endure for ever, and his Throne shall last as the Sun before me. *Pf. 89. 36.* as for thee also *by the blood of thy Covenant I will send out thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein there is no water. Zach: 9. 11.* thy prisoners, that is Christs prisoners out of the pit wherein there is no water, that is, out of Babylon a comfortless and heartless place, by the blood of thy Covenant that is, through Christs Covenant confirmed by his blood. It was through Christ they were set free. *An. saith Daniel. Dan. 9. 17.* Look down upon thy Sanctuary for the Lords sake, that is, for Christs sake, the great Prince *Michael*, that is ay for the Church. Lo *Michael* one of the chief Princes came to help me. *Dan. 10. 13.* This good honest Angel never failes me, but is ay at my back, when I have any thing to do for you I never misse him. 3. A third ground is the name and glory of God which is mightily engaged for the help of the Church what wilt thou do to thy great name: is a strong Argument, when all weapons have failed, that hath force and vertue in it; we must even have a cast of thy hat for that, seeing thou hast taken us to be thy people and brought us out of Egypt, thou must not suffer the heathen

heathen to say, for mischief thou did it to slay them upon the mountaines, and that thou wast not able to bring them to the Land thou promised unto their Fathers; and sometimes he saith, I wrought for my names sake, and at other times, for my names sake I will deferre mine anger, I will hold my hand, and not destroy them utterly. 4. A fourth ground is, That free love, which moved him to pity them, when they were lying in their blood, rank, open and avowed enemies to him, that same love will pity them still; he promiseth this, I will heal their backslidings, and love them freely. *Hos. 14. 3.* I will even do this freely, for ye have neither in you, nor on you that can help this business. These are most pregnant grounds, whereupon the Church may expect help from God.

3. What are the Conditions that are required in a Church, which may warrantably expect help from God. *Ans. 1.* It is required, that she have somewhat of pure ordinances, otherwise she deserves not the name of a Church; for it's not to a Land, or such a multitude of people, as such, that God by his promise is bound to, but to a multitude or incorporation having pure ordinances. This is that which made Israel a Church, when they were miserably corrupted with Idolatry, they having some of the pure ordinances, as the word, and some of the Sacraments as Circumcision, and until they lost the word, doctrine, worship and Sacraments altogether, God did never altogether reject them. 2. There must be a remnant, all the promises have alwayes a respect to the remnant, the remnant of grace, though it be but small; hence it is said, if the Lord had not left us a remnant, we had been as Sodom and made like unto Gomorrah. 3. There must be Intercessors, the Church indeed is in a hard case, that wants them, as is clear *Ezek. 22. 30. 31.* And I sought for a man



amongst them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the Land, but I found none, therefore have I powred out my judgment upon them, I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath, their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord. Yet in some singular cases he helps, when there is none to help, and no Intercessor *Isai. 59. 16.* And he saw that there was no man, and wondred that there was no Intercessor, therefore his arme brought Salvation to him, and his righteousness sustained him; and if so, much more when there are Intercessors, although they were but a few. *Jer. 5. 1.* Run ye to and fro through the streets of Ierusalem, and seek and know in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, that seeketh the truth, and executeth judgment, and I will pardon it. 4. It is required, that that incorporation deserves best the title, and name of the true Israel, and Church of God of any incorporation in the world, and that because God hath resolved still to have a Church, and we cannot think that he will cast off a better Church, and keep a worse. You shall find, that although Israel was oftentimes corrupted, yet evil as they were, they were the best incorporation in all the habitable world: and that was the thing that kept them to the fore, and gave them still a right to that promise, let Israel hope in the Lord for ever and ever. And yet even in their worst case in captivity, and out of it; in well and wo; indeed they were cast off at last, but there was good reason for that, for the Christian Church came in, and took their rights and priviledges from them. But put out mine eye with any Instance, that they were wholly put away, while they came in. Hence I conclude, that that Church ought to hope in the Lord for ever and ever, and that even in their lowest condition, when they have destroyed themselves; and if so, I hope our case is the better this day.

4. How far was this promise verified to the Church of Israel? Ans. 1. In respect that he helped them many times, and delivered them when they were very low, even from eternal judgments, how off did he deliver them when they cried unto him, when under the feet of their Oppressors. 2. In respect that he kept alway a little stock and stool, and a remnant among them in the captivity, and out of it, which did bring forth a new brood, and multiplied three times more, especially it was made out at the coming of Christ, and the preaching of the Gospel to them. 3. And chiefly, it shall be made out at their ingrafting, when Israel shall return to the Lord.

5. How far may we make use of this promise, and how far is it applicable to the Church of *Brittain and Ireland*? In Answer to this, we shall first shew how far these conditions, which are required in a corporation which may warrantably expect help, are to be found in the Church of *Brittain and Ireland*. 2. We shall shew some additional things, which may further strengthen our faith in this thing.

To the first, what of the conditions which are required in an incorporation which may warrantably expect help, or to be found in the Church of *Brittain and Ireland*? Ans. 1. That a Church must have pure ordinances; and we say, we have pure ordinances, and much more pure than God gave Israel ground to hope in him for; who will say against it? we have the pure Word of God Preached, and pure Sacraments, and it is not long since we had pure worship, pure Doctrine, and pure Discipline and Government, all very neer the paterne. Indeed there were very great corruptions now brought in; but from whence have they come? from the Church of *Brittain and Ireland*? we deny that; for we declare before Heaven and Earth, that these vvho

deserve best the name of the Church of *Brittain and Ireland*, that they do adhere to the Doctrine, worship, Discipline and Government sworn to in our solemn League and Covenant; but these Corrupters have come from a party, whom we have opposed since the year 38. who have violently riven pure ordinances from us. When *Israel* was cast off, their defection was universal and arbitrary, voluntary and by choice; but we by violence and force are driven from pure ordinances by an ungodly party, whom we have striven with from the womb. They shall find that the Church of *Scotland* wants not pure ordinances, but that ungodly party hath violently rugged them from the true Dispensers and Stewards of them, and hath intruded a pack of prophane perjured slaves to dispense them; the Lord is our witness, we have not done it by choice.

2. There must be a remnant; I never bade better, for we plead, that there is a numerous remnant in the Church of *Brittain and Ireland*, and such a remnant as was never found, for any thing we know in any Nation or Kingdome at once. I grant the remnant is far from their duty, but what can ye conclude from that; that God will leave that Church? I deny that to follow; I will indeed conclude the cloud to be growing, and that it is not at it's height, but not that God will give up with that Church. I will get you Scriptures to speak the Contrary, particularly *Jer. 5. 1.* and *Isa. 6. ult.* the remnant shall be as a teil tree, it is a significant word, it signifies the terrise that was on the North of *Jerusalem*, which kept the storme off the Temple, and shall be as an Oak, whose substance is in them, the holy seed shall be the substance of the Land, and if so, then God and the Church of *Brittain and Ireland* cannot shed, for that condition is mightily verified in it.

3. There must be Intercessors, I grant, that gives

a dash to our faith : but although we have been in the sense of our sin, granting that we are far from what we should have been at, yet God and the World knowes that there are Intercessors for the Church of *Brittain and Ireland*, in the Land, and out of the Land. And if God sought but one, and would have spared for ones sake; I dare say, there are many thousands lamenting over the condition of *Brittain and Ireland*. Do not think that God will shut out their prayer : he will regard the prayer of the destitute, there hath been many a sappy prayer put up, and many a tear shed within these four years; and the people of God have been filling Gods bottle with them, and we hope it shall be full ere it be long, every one of his should be helping to fill it. It is a strange thing, though there be so many Godly folk, that we cannot get Gods bottle filled up amongst us, when it is full, they will make the wheele of providence go about to the confusion of enemies, and the redemption of his people. 4. The Church which may warrantably expect help, must have the best claime to be called the true Church of any Church in the World. And I presume, that this Condition stands mightily verified in the Church of *Brittain and Ireland*. I say it, with submission to others who know better the affairs of other Churches abroad than I do. We have pure ordinances, and are under Covenant with God. we have infest our seed in them, and have laid all to the stake for them, and have been signally owned of God in that work, and the rumour hath gone abroad through the Reformed Churches, that we are the purest Church, wherein we will find the best title and claime: if that will not do it, ye may think men may take their word again in their Covenanting, but that cannot be without consent of parties. ye will say, that the Church of *Brittain and Ireland* hath broken Covenant with God. I grant, that

that is a great Objection. I grant indeed our Rulers have judicially broken Covenant to their shame, and the Prelatick party hath voluntarily and deliberately done it: but is that the deed of the Church of Scotland? I deny; for these that best deserves the name of the one, do abominat that deed of theirs, and do cleave to the Covenant, and are suffering, because they will not break it. That the purest remnant may deservedly be called the Church, Read *Psal.* 22. penult. a seed shall serve him, and it shall be counted to the Lord for a generation. The seed that sorts him is counted the Church, these who adhere to him, his Covenant and ordinances, and bear Testimony against all that breaks his Covenant, and are backsliders, and they shall declare his righteousness to the generation to come, that he hath done this. Hold your tongue; They are not yet borne, but in their mothers womb, and their fathers loins, who shall reap the good of this work, that we are suffering for. Take up your heart then, and be not discouraged, seeing we have such access to these four conditions, for as they have advanced, they shall get all we have ere they get them: yet let us hold to our claime, while a better come, and take it from us. I shall in the next roome, give you some few Items that every las & lad may make use of for strengthening their faith that God will help I. we have a very insolent party to deal with, who have made void Gods law, and established iniquity by a law. And shall the throne of iniquity have place with God? No it cannot be, they are bloody and deceitful men, and shall they live half their dayes? No, they shall not: they have broken Covenant, and committed the most horrid breach that ever was heard tell of, they have not only broken it, but burnt it with the hand of the hangman. Shall they break the Covenant and prosper? shall they burn it, and be delivered? no, they shall  
not,



not, and their fall is like to our rising. 2. They are become grievous Oppressors they have little more to do now but draw Gentlemen and others to their unhappy ensnaring courts to fine & confine, for the sighs of the poor and the cries of the needy God will arise. 3. This quarrel and controversy betwixt them and us is no new thing, and God hath not yet fully decided it, whether they be right or we. We have been fighting with them these several years, and have been setting the work of Reformation up the bray, and ay as we set it up, they dang it down. Now it stands God on his credit to carry the day freely from them without a start of them, for his work is perfect. 4. There is a number of Godly, able and faithful Ministers in the Land. The people of God in all generations did look on that as a signe of an harvest. Alas! if there be no more to follow, It shall be a signe of our ruine. Hath he polished so many shafts, to let them ly by, and hath no more ado with them? that we can neither think nor say. 5. I know no place in all the World, where there is a work of God breaking up. If there were a work breaking up else where, indeed I would be feared, they would come and inhaunse the rights, and take away the inheritance from us; but since there is not a place in the World, where there is a work of God breaking up, but all the powers of the earth are against our Lord Jesus Christ, and nothing but darkness covering the earth. Therefore we cannot think that God hath a mind to throw down his Temple here, till we know of a better set up else where. 6. The hopes of the people of God saith somewhat, they have hopes that cannot fail, though many think little of their hope, and though they cannot give a solide reason of them; yet they cannot be put off it, but God will send help. You must let them  
alone,

alone, for the expectation of the poor shall not faile. God that hath wrought that impression of hope in them, he will not suffer them to be ashamed, if it will but answer their expectation. 7. I apprehend that the name of God is singularly engaged for the Church of *Brittain and Ireland*. I will tell you, how I think the Name of God is singularly engaged, the word is gone through all the Churches, that these three Kingdomes of *Scotland, England and Ireland* have entred into a Covenant with God, to reforme Religion to the utmost pin, and that they have laid all to the stake for that vvorke, and that God did ovvn them singularly in it, and many a carcass fell to the ground for it and many a pound and penny vvas spent for it. And though many did not vvhath they did vwith a perfect heart, yet there vvere many honest. The vvord novv runs again, that that same very party, vvo did engage their lives and fortunes for that vvorke are brought into slavery and bondage by a prevailing party, the vilest of men, and off-scurings of the Land, and that for their adhering to the Covenant, they are novv brought under contempt by that same very thing, whereby they were made honourable; rid your feet of that my dear hearts if ye can. It may be ye will say, that that party hath fallen from their first love. I grant that, but these are cases of Conscience we must keep amongst our selves. What knowes the Nations abroad of that. I cannot see how he can live and not help us (with reverence be it spoken) without a mighty disparagement to him. O Lord, what wilt thou do to thy great name? I have reckoned it a special providence of God, that hath led me to this Text, to fix these two Truths upon you. The one is, that you are to be blamed for your own destruction. And the other, that your help is in God. I take them all in hand,

hand, be they Ministers or people who clear themselves of the first, that they have taken with their sinnes, that have destroyed them, then God shall clear himself of the second. Let us hope and wait for it, seeing Israel may hope in the Lord forever and ever.

F I N I S.



Mr William Cutler.

and to say that of people who clear them-  
selves of the guilt that they have incurred with their  
sins, they have enjoyed them, then God  
will be kind to them, and let us hope and  
pray, that they may be in the land of the living.

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